

# Parents

## Welcome to Greek Life at Western Carolina!

Your son or daughter has embarked upon a great adventure by choosing to attend Western Carolina University. Your student has many opportunities ahead of him or her while at WCU. By joining a fraternity or sorority, he or she is joining hundreds of other new members in their search for a sense of community at the university. Students can feel overwhelmed once they are in a new environment. WCU requires students to take the first semester of their freshman year to adjust to our campus life before making the decision to “Go Greek.”

For many parents, the Greek community conjures up images of Animal House. That’s simply not the reality! There are many myths about the Greek community, but the reality is that men and women in fraternities and sororities are committed to their academics, volunteer time in the community, develop and strengthen their leadership skills, and form a campus network with other Greeks.

## Parents Often Ask . . .

### **How will my student benefit from joining a fraternity or sorority?**

Sororities and fraternities have a distinguished history on the WCU campus. These organizations are rooted in founding principles that foster academic achievement, student involvement, community service, and life-long friendships. Greek organizations are groups of men and women who come together to form a personal network of individuals with similar ideas, interests, and a mutual pursuit of a well-rounded college education. Advantages include:

- A support group to help make the adjustment to college easier.
- Scholastic resources to help students achieve their academic goals.
- Leadership skills acquired through hands-on experience.
- Encouragement to get involved and maximize their potential on campus in non-Greek student organization.
- Opportunities for active participation in community service projects.

### **How will joining a Greek organization affect my student’s academic pursuits?**

Sororities and fraternities serve as a great resource for students academically, through study hours and tutoring programs. Most chapters require a high grade point average for initial membership into the organization. The minimum cumulative GPA required to participate in Greek recruitment is a 2.5 with a minimum of 12 credit hours.

### **What are the social aspects of fraternity and sorority membership?**

Because the Greek community at Western Carolina contributes to the social activity on campus, it has taken great strides toward creating a responsible and safe environment for its members. All fraternities and sororities have strict policies regulating the consumption of alcohol for underage members and guests. Organizations work closely with the Fraternity and Sorority professional

staff to conduct safe social activities. All Greek organizations are held accountable to the Western Carolina Alcohol Policy and North Carolina State Laws.

### **What is the financial obligation?**

Like any opportunity for involvement in college, there is a financial commitment associated with joining a Fraternity or sorority. The costs go toward the Inter/National fees, chapter operating expenses, and social functions. Financial obligations differ among individual chapters. Some Chapters may have payment plans available for students, as well as scholarships. While your son or daughter is participating in the recruitment process, make sure that he or she asks about the financial obligations of membership.

### **Is hazing a part of the Greek culture at Western Carolina?**

Western Carolina University has a zero-tolerance policy regarding hazing that is consistent with North Carolina state law and (inter)national Fraternity and Sorority policies. Hazing includes any activity that subjects members to harassment, ridicule, intimidation, physical exhaustion, abuse, or mental distress. Hazing is contrary to the purposes of the Greek community and the University. Hazing is not tolerated. If you sense your student may be participating in inappropriate activities as a result of membership in a fraternity or sorority, you should contact the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Calls will be handled in a discrete manner.

### **Who is actually in charge of the fraternities and sororities?**

Individual chapters elect officers to manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. These officers are assisted by alumni who act as advisors. Each chapter is also responsible to their (inter)national organization, which offers support, advice, and direction through paid professional staff and regional volunteers. At WCU, there is also a staff made up of professional directors and graduate students to serve as the primary contacts for the Greek community.

## **Rush/Recruitment/Intake**

Western Carolina is a deferred recruitment campus, which means that first year students cannot accept invitations for membership from Greek organizations until at least their second semester at WCU. The process is different for each governing council.

Interfraternity Council (IFC) Recruitment consists of an information fair, open houses, and gatherings like sporting events, cookouts, and invite only events during the fall and spring semesters. IFC chapters extend invitations for membership at the conclusion of the week's events. To be eligible to join, men must have a 2.5 GPA, 12 earned credit hours. Some Chapters may have requirements that exceed this.

National Pan-hellenic Council (NPHC) Membership Intake occurs at various times throughout the academic year depending on the individual organization policies. The individual organizations hold interest meetings to further explain their heritage and commitments of joining. Attendance at these meetings is the best way to express your interest in joining. Informational flyers and notices for membership intake are posted around campus.

Collegiate Panhellenic (CPC) Recruitment consists of interest meetings, registration, an informal round, and concludes with the formal process in January. To be eligible to join, women must have a 2.5 GPA, 12 earned credit hours. Some Chapters may have requirements that exceed this.

## **What is my role as a parent?**

- Encourage your son or daughter to attend as many campus events as possible during the fall semester. Being involved is the best way to meet active Greek members and learn about their chapters. Involvement in other student organizations is looked favorably upon during the membership selection process.
- Students need support throughout the process of recruitment/intake and new member education. Be supportive and learn as much as you can about Greek life by asking questions of your student as he or she meets members in fraternities and sororities.
- Keep an open mind . . . Greek life is not for everyone. Just because you may have been a fraternity or sorority member doesn't mean that it is the right choice for your son or daughter.
- Fraternities and sororities are different on every campus. Groups that may have been strong/weak on the campus where you attended school may not have the same reputation at Western Carolina. Let your son or daughter choose the group that he or she feels the most comfortable joining.
- Talk to your son or daughter beforehand about the financial obligation. Determine who will pay for what and where the limits are.
- Know that the system of fraternity/sorority recruitment at WCU is competitive. Not everyone who wants to be Greek will receive a bid.
- Do not become too involved in the sorority and fraternity recruitment/intake process . . . this is your son or daughter's decision. There will be plenty of activities and events for you to attend or even help plan once your student joins one of our organizations!
- Too often, parents do not allow their students to "fight their own battles." It helps the student mature and gain some assertiveness when allowed to call various offices if they have questions or concerns about their decision to go Greek.
- Keep the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life contact information on hand if you have any questions or concerns about Greek Life on WCU's campus.
- The Fraternity and Sorority Life website is a great resource for all students and parents. [www.gogreek.wcu.edu](http://www.gogreek.wcu.edu)